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Docket Management Branch (HFA-305)
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Six and one-half years ago, I took my father out to a dinner of raw oysters that killed him. Since no one ever took the blame for this...I have always harbored it. The oysters were contaminated with *Vibrio Vulnificus*, which Federal and State health officials had long known to be deadly, but had done little or nothing to control. After Papa died, I did everything humanly possible to get the government to move so it wouldn't happen again. The industry opposed alerting "high-risk" consumers to health dangers through the posting of nationwide point-of-purchase warning labels. I was even invited to the FDA when it unveiled the proposed Option #2 privately to my family. This plan would certainly have saved lives. However, bowing to industry pressure, and the threat of losing funding, the FDA backed off the plan and it never was implemented.

The FDA and CDC reports will show that well over a hundred more individuals have lost their lives since then. And God knows how many more have suffered serious maiming of limbs and debilitating illness. Now the FDA has another opportunity to do the right thing. The agency can require that all raw oysters sold to consumers be free of *Vibrio Vulnificus*. If the FDA takes the action urged by CSPI in its Citizen Petition, raw oysters will kill no more unsuspecting consumers.

If FDA fails to act now I'm letting my personal guilt go....I'm done. From now on, when I get calls from family members of individuals who have suffered from this horrific poisoning, I will point the finger of reproach at government. I will let the grieving families know, point blank, that it didn't have to happen. It shouldn't have happened.

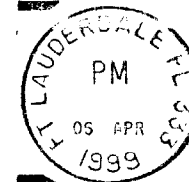


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